

Michigan
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Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, September 4, 2008

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Sex offender, Troy Gooch, charged in attempted abduction and sexual assault of 13-year-old girl

by Shannon Murphy | The Flint Journal
Thursday September 04, 2008, 10:06 AM

Editor's note: This is an updated version of a [previous post on this article](#).



Troy A. Gooch

CLIO, Michigan -- A Clio man faces up to life in prison after police said he allegedly tried to abduct and sexually assault a 13-year-old girl.

Troy A. Gooch, 34, was charged Wednesday with four felonies, including kidnapping of a child under the age of 14; kidnapping with the intent to commit sexual penetration; assault with intent to commit sexual penetration; and accosting a child for immoral purposes.

Clio police said Gooch entered about 4 a.m. Sunday a Pine Street home where the teen girl was sleeping over. Police said he knew the family that lived there.

Gooch forced the teen at knifepoint to go with him to the basement, where police said he tried to restrain her with duct tape and force her into a crawl space.

Police believe he intended to sexually assault her.

The girl was able to fight Gooch off and escape, police said. He left through a basement window but was later arrested at his home.

Flint Journal extras Previous articles on this case:

- **Sept. 3, 2008:** [Man charged in attempted abduction, assault of 13-year-old girl](#)

- **Sept. 2, 2008:** [Clio man, 34, could face charges in abduction, attempted sexual assault of girl, 13](#)
"Based on the police investigation, I have determined that there is probable cause to believe that Troy Anthony Gooch of Clio kidnapped a 13-year-old girl with the intent to sexually assault her," Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton said in a release. "Fortunately, the brave girl was able to fight off her attacker and report the incident to the police." In 1994, Gooch was sentenced to five to 15 years in prison for what police said was a similar crime. He originally was charged with criminal sexual conduct first degree, but pleaded guilty to CSC third degree. It is unclear if he spent any time in prison. He is listed on the Michigan Public Sex Offender Registry, which lists him as compliant and states he last verified his address in July. Gooch, who is being held in the Genesee County Jail on a \$325,000 bond, is expected back in 67th District Court on Sept. 12.



September 4, 2008

Sen. Nancy Cassis Lansing Connection

Further measures needed to strengthen child protection laws and prevent misspending of taxpayer dollars

Two recently released state performance audits have revealed serious problems at the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS). The first audit, released July 22, found that hundreds of convicted sex offenders and other criminals were authorized to be child day care providers in the state.

Financial audits of state departments are regularly done every other year. Performance audits are done upon request or if the auditor general deems it necessary. The two recently released audits were initiated by the auditor general based on poor results by DHS in past inquiries.

The auditor general's report covered a period of review between 2003 and early 2006 and focused on Michigan's Child Development and Care Program, which provides subsidies to low-income families for child care. During the past three years, the Senate has spearheaded important legislative packages addressing many of the issues identified in the report. We passed legislation to ensure children are not placed in the care of a criminal and to provide parents with information about investigations involving their child's care provider.

The Student Safety Initiative of 2005, a bicameral plan specifically deals with the issue of background checks and criminal history. The laws:

- Prohibit convicted sex offenders from working in schools or day care centers;
- Require background checks for ALL school and day care employees;
- Prevent convicted sex offenders from obtaining a day care license; and
- Require background checks for ALL individuals over the age of 18 living in a day care home.

Although the laws were signed in the fall of 2005, much of the legislation did not take effect until after the audit was completed. As a result of these new laws, however, many of the current day care providers are licensed and therefore must undergo thorough background checks.

In addition, legislation to ensure accountability in the handling of child protection cases and improve agency communication was recently approved by the Senate Family and Human Services Committee. Senate Bill 1418 will require DHS to collaborate with local Friend of the Court offices on cases where a child is the subject of a protective services investigation and a custody or parenting time case is also pending.

The second DHS audit, released July 29, disclosed that the state improperly paid out between \$200 million and \$400 million to child day care providers from 2003 to March 2006. While we can be confident that effective measures are now in place to help prevent further child abuse by day care providers, what can be done to prevent further improper payments? As Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, upon hearing of this mismanagement of funds, I immediately began looking into the issue further and requested copies of the Audits to review.

To cover the hundreds of millions of dollars in reckless spending which were approved by the department, some in the Legislature would choose to penalize Michigan residents by raising their taxes, like the Governor did last year. Armed with this audit, Senate Republicans and I will fight to adopt meaningful reforms to stop the improper spending from happening in the first place.

Both of the audits exposed injustices. One is an injustice for children in need of protection. The second is for taxpayers struggling to make ends meet while the State spends money on fraudulent claims.

On September 11, the state Senate will be holding a joint committee hearing to address the serious issues raised by the audits. I look forward to working with the committee members to prevent these injustices from happening again.

Your feedback is always welcome.

Contact me by e-mail at: sennccassis@senate.michigan.gov, or toll free at 1-888-38-NANCY.

Between The Lines Newspaper

From issue number 1636

[Return to PrideSource](#)

Voting? Who cares.

Originally printed 09/04/2008

Dear Jody

Q: I know that this is politically incorrect, but I just want to say I am already so tired of the brouhaha about the elections coming up this November. My friends are all pretty involved in the Democratic Party and think I should be too. They constantly want me to help out at some event, have a house party, lick envelopes, you name it. I tell them I am not interested, and they seem to think I am a horrible, evil person. I also don't think it is a big deal that a black person and a woman are running. It doesn't seem to me that it matters much who is in office, at least in my life. I don't really notice any difference. How do I get them to understand that even though I don't think this is important, I am not a bad person, and they should respect my feelings and leave me alone?

Leave Me Alone

A: Wow! As I sit here watching the Democratic Convention, reading your e-mail, and seeing that we have a democratic nominee that is a minority, and that a woman was a serious contender, I feel privileged to witness such positive history being made before my eyes. So many minority people and women have worked hard, suffered abuse, and died just so a time like this could happen.

In addition, I can't imagine that anyone would think that the elections are not important. I believe it is extremely important that we are all involved in the election, at least to the extent that we understand who is running and what they stand for. I also believe that, as an American citizen, we should vote. But I do agree that if you don't want to become involved in the election, it doesn't make you a bad person.

This gives me that opportunity to encourage everyone out there to register to vote, if you haven't already, and to make sure you vote on Election Day. We need to be concerned not only for the presidential election but also for those we send to the legislature, our governor, mayors, along with school board member, etc. I disagree with the writer that they don't make a difference in our lives; in fact, they make a huge difference. Ask those of us who are now fighting in Iraq; ask those of us don't have health insurance; ask those of us who don't have the right to marry or adopt a child. As part of the LGBT community and a citizen of this country, we need to make our voices heard.

Oct. 6, 2008 is the last day to register for November 2008 general election. You can register to vote for federal, state, and local elections by mail; at your county, city, or township clerk's office; or by visiting any Secretary of State branch office.

In addition, the following state agencies offer voter registration services to their clients: Department of Human Services, the Department of Community Health and the Department of Career Development. Military recruitment centers also provide voter registration services.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/vote.

Voter registration fair planned in Ypsilanti

Posted by [anash](#) September 03, 2008 17:07PM

The Washtenaw County Department of Human Services is hosting a voter registration fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, Sept. 8 at its offices, 22 Center Street in Ypsilanti.

The event, co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters and the Ypsilanti Township Voter Register, offers information on voting and practice ballots.

Residents can obtain voter registration applications at any local or state Department of Human Services office throughout the year. The deadline to register for the Nov. 4 general election is Oct. 6.

Categories: [Election](#)

Comments

Footer



Former Head Start director remembered as "one of the finest"

Posted by Ashley A. Smith | The Flint Journal September 04, 2008 08:56AM

GENESEE COUNTY, Michigan -- For about 30 years, Harold "Mac" McKeever served Genesee County's low-income families and children.

"Mac lived Head Start," said Steve Walker, director of Genesee County Community Action Resource Development. "He was seen as one of the finest Head Start directors in the country."

McKeever, 61, of Flint Township died Friday.

A graduate of Beecher High School, McKeever eventually became director of out-county operations for Head Start after working as a social worker for the Michigan Department of Human Services.

"He went before the (U.S.) House of Representatives not that long ago to give testimony on Head Start," said Walker, who worked with McKeever for 27 years. "He lived and breathed (Head Start). It was his life and bread."

McKeever helped the county's Head Start program grow from three school districts in 1979 to the current 20 districts.

McKeever was known for his distinctive laugh and his love of telling stories, Walker said.

"I will miss him a great deal," Walker said. "I've learned some people are not replaceable."

McKeever also worked as a part-time instructor at Mott Community College and served as a National Peer Reviewer for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In Flint, McKeever was involved with the Job Corps Collaborating Task Force and served on Gov. Jennifer Granholm's Task Force Early Childhood Education Committee that started the Great Start Readiness Program, which provides preschool programs for at-risk children.

McKeever leaves his daughters Stacea McKeever and Heather McKeever, brothers John and Joe, sister Roberta Lehr and many friends and family. Funeral services were held Wednesday.

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Niles Daily Star

ONLINE EDITION

[Print Page](#)

Food pantries in 'crisis mode'

By JESSICA SIEFF / Niles Daily Star
Thursday, September 4, 2008 6:29 AM EDT

NILES - From Santa Rosa, Calif., to Boston Mass. and right here at home, food pantries across America are struggling under harder times - with more families in need and fewer donations.

The United Way and the Volunteer Center of Southwest Michigan are hoping to give people more information and more opportunity to volunteer their time and their services, and two new opportunities to help feed families in the community have popped up in Niles.

"We are in what I would call crisis mode," said Jan Nowak, social service director of The Salvation Army in Niles. Two food drives are normally held each year to help The Salvation Army's grocery assistance program - a postal worker's drive in the spring and another drive during the holiday season. The situation is so dire, Nowak said, The Salvation Army was forced to institute another food drive - going on now.

In May, Nowak said the organization received 14,000 pounds of food following the postal worker's food drive. Last year, she said that amount lasted the organization into the beginning of the colder months. Already, "it's almost gone."

"We have been getting swamped," she added. And she said the face of those in need is changing. More and more, Nowak sees the middle class becoming the "working poor."

As more people lose jobs, hours and wage increases, "the trickle down is where we're getting hit.... Times are tough on everybody," she said. "Including the givers. And some of the receivers - used to be the givers."

As demands increase on people's time and money, food banks and pantries like the one operated through The Salvation Army, "right away they see that impact," said Doris Higgins of the Volunteer Center of Southwest Michigan.

The center is gearing up for the United Way's Day of Caring on Thursday, Sept. 11. The event is to bolster volunteerism for area organizations. "United Way has recently adopted the theme 'Live United,'" states the organization's website. "It is a call to action for everyone to become a part of community change."

Nowak said United Way's help to The Salvation Army is invaluable. "The United Way does a truly outstanding job of putting a face to the stories," Nowak said. "Making it tangible, making it visible - making it real."

'Family Volunteerism,' said Higgins is just one way that people can help those in need in their communities.

As a family, parents could teach their children about volunteering by having them go door to door collecting donations of food. "Think of how powerful that could be," she said. "There's all kinds of opportunities."

A total of 75 organizations made United Way's list of opportunities from Niles to Benton Harbor and beyond. But some could say it's more than just an opportunity - it's a need. Higgins said people might generally think "if I don't have 100 hours to give," they can't volunteer. But they can, she said. And helping out can be as simple as taking the time to stop out at the yard of an elderly next door neighbor, and raking up the leaves come fall.

"Or when they have those fabulous 10 for \$10 deals," Nowak said, of sales that often happen at local stores. Grabbing a few extra cans and dropping them off at a local food pantry, means helping someone put dinner on the table, when their money has all been spent on rent and utilities.

The Mount Calvary Baptist Church, at 601 Ferry St. in Niles recently announced their new Food Pantry Community Program. The program, according to an announcement by the church will open on the fourth Saturday of each month between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services organization, which helps those in St. Joseph and Cass counties announced in

early August that they were experiencing their own shortage - putting out a call for help and for food donations.

From June 28 to Aug. 20 alone, Nowak said The Salvation Army helped 117 families with food assistance. Last year, she said more than 5,000 people received help total. Asked if she expected that number to rise this year she said, "it already has."

Organizations that rely heavily on the help and donations of others have little recourse when shelves go unstocked. "Prayer," Nowak said is what The Salvation Army turns to. "A lot of praying."

Nowak is hoping the food drive for The Salvation Army continues for at least a couple of weeks. Those interested in helping will find barrels posted at the Niles District Library, 1st Source Bank on Main Street, Martin's Supermarket and a barrel is to be posted at the Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce building at Fourth and Main streets.

For more information on United Way's 'Day of Caring' visit www.uwsm.org/dayofcaring.

To find out about other volunteer opportunities in the area, contact the Volunteer Center of Southwest Michigan at www.volunteerswmi.org.

The Salvation Army, located at 424 N. 15th St. in Niles is open 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m., with soup kitchen operations taking place from noon to 1 p.m.



Mount Pleasant woman used her children's state aid to fund scam

Posted by The Saginaw News September 04, 2008 08:28AM

MOUNT PLEASANT -- Authorities say a Mount Pleasant woman used her children to perpetrate a candy scam.

Joanne Walters must appear for a Monday, Sept. 15, preliminary hearing on single counts of committing fraud under false pretenses less than \$1,000 and using false names with charitable solicitation plus two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

All are misdemeanors.

Police claim between June 2007 and June 2008, Walters used a state-issued bridge card to buy candy then made her 11-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter sell the product for profit, under the pretense of raising money for charity, door-to-door in Gratiot and Isabella counties.

The state Department of Human Services issues bridge cards in lieu of food stamps.

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Audit: more Medicaid oversight could catch thousands more in overpayments

Gongwer News Service
Sept. 3, 2008

Although the Department of Community Health's process for identifying fraudulent or otherwise errant payments through the Medicaid program is moderately effective, Auditor General Thomas McTavish said on Wednesday that if the department improved the screening process for checking up on providers such as managed health care plans and pharmacies, it could stop a minimum of hundreds of thousands of dollars in improper payments from ever leaving state coffers.

The [performance audit](#) reviewed the Bureau of Medicaid Financial Management and Administrative Services Medical Services Administration, the unit in the DCH primarily responsible for conducting internal audits of the more than \$7.8 billion paid out for Medicaid in fiscal year 2005-06 and researched payments made from October 2003 through June 2007.

Although the bureau in FY 2005-06 identified \$6.9 million in potentially improper payments, the auditor general report said that DCH could recoup even more money if it changed the way it selects providers for audits; improved its monitoring of health plans, which administer Medicaid for about 64 percent of Medicaid recipients; and also kept closer tabs on contracts it has with pharmacies.

For example, the report said, the bureau did not review the propriety of about \$432,000 of potentially errant payments made to pharmacies in FY 2003-04.

Based on the settlement rate the department has with providers, the audit estimated that the state could have recovered as much as \$233,000 of those dollars, of which \$103,000 would go back into the general fund.

As for changing its process for selecting which providers to audit for proper payments, DCH should consider providers that receive a large amount of Medicaid dollars high-risk, the audit said.

For example, the department's audits of hospitals cast a net that included \$63.7 million in Medicaid payments. Had DCH chosen hospitals based on those that receive the largest payments from the state, the department would have audited \$210 million in Medicaid payments, an increase of 130 percent. The increase in audited funds could have similarly increased the amount the state could have recovered in improper payouts, the report said.

While the department agreed in part with all of the recommendations to improve the auditing process, it said in its response that it doesn't necessarily consider hospitals that receive more Medicaid funds high-risk.

Instead, DCH said, it has started to factor in other risks for weighing which providers to audit, including error rates in past audits.

The audit also said that the department should create a better system for controlling conflicts of interest. For example, in a peer review system, a doctor who is hired by DCH to decide if patients should get prior approval to check into the hospital may be the same doctor who reviews the chart for DCH to vouch for whether the hospital treatment was a necessary expenditure by Medicaid.

A further complication exists in that the department reviewed doctors' decisions to admit patients into the hospital in only 2 percent of cases and reviewed the hospital records for doctors' authorization only 1 percent of the time.

The department agrees that potential conflicts of interest exist in the peer review process and therefore prohibits the staff member that approved hospital admission from reviewing the decision to approve hospital treatment. It also has stepped up its monitoring of peer reviews to 10 percent of the admission decisions and 5 percent of chart reviews.



Group sponsors poverty simulations in area

By ART BUKOWSKI

abukowski@record-eagle.com

September 04, 2008 12:00 am

TRAVERSE CITY -- Poverty very much exists in the Grand Traverse region, and there's something everyday citizens and local organizations can do about it.

That's one message the Traverse Bay Poverty Reduction Initiative hopes to stress with its "Month in Poverty" simulations, held periodically throughout the area. The other message: Poverty can be crippling and involve more than a lack of money.

"(People in poverty) have a lot of different problems, and they wouldn't all just be solved if we gave them \$50,000," said TBPRI co-chair Jim Rowlett.

Those who participate in half-day simulations are assigned to role-play as families, and TBPRI volunteers act as bankers, employers, doctors, grocers and other individuals with whom those families typically would interact.

The families then wade through their simulated life with varied incomes and circumstances assigned to them. Unexpected problems arise -- the loss of a job or an expensive illness, for example -- and the families are forced to cope.

TBPRI has hosted a few of the simulations since last year. They're targeted at organizations and groups that deal with those in poverty, but individuals can participate. TBPRI prefers to have between 40 and 70 people before scheduling a simulation.

About 50 parishioners of The Presbyterian Church of Traverse City went through the simulation in March. Associate Pastor Becky Chamberlain called it "hugely valuable" for the church's continued efforts at assisting those in poverty.

"It's just a real eye-opener ... people just really thought that it was worthwhile," she said.

Once someone experiences firsthand the difficulty of poverty, they're better equipped to assist those in need, organizers say.

"Our goal is first of all to get community understanding, with the thought that with that understanding comes the inclination to help," Rowlett said. "By seeing the kinds of things that people are going through, they begin to see how they can help."

The Department of Human Services in Benzie and Manistee counties and a Northwestern Michigan College group are scheduled to go through the simulations on Sept. 23 and Oct. 17, respectively, and more are expected to be scheduled in early 2009.

Anyone interested in participating in a simulation can contact Joe Povolito at (231) 256-8234.

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Letter: Extreme poverty**Posted by [ahunt](#) September 04, 2008 09:00AM**

I was saddened to read about the increase in the poverty rate for Kent County ("Poverty line getting longer," Press, Aug. 27). I work with anti-hunger and poverty programs every day, yet I was shocked by the number of Grand Rapids residents (22,497 in 2007 vs. 13,957 in 2000) living in "extreme poverty," which is \$10,325 annually for a family of four. How do they survive?

While many of us are dismayed at the escalating price of food and gasoline, these folks aren't buying these essentials at all! Evidence of this is the alarming increase in families relying on food pantries to feed their families -- over 7,000 served in Kent County in July. This safety net is ready to burst at the seams and we need both private and government response to hold it together.

Everyone can help. Fall food drives and holiday programs begin soon. Volunteers and donations are needed more than ever. Congress should act quickly in September to reduce poverty and boost the economy by increasing aid for home heating (how does one pay a gas bill on a \$10,000 annual income?), unemployment, Medicaid programs and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Setting a national goal to reduce poverty is long overdue. Our high poverty rate shows how badly such a commitment is needed.

E-mail a letter to the editor for publication online and in print: pulse@grpress.com

Categories: [Featured](#), [Letters to the editor](#)

Comments**olda says...**

Boy you dont get it do you our poor top 1% of tax payers are suffering their average income only has gone up a measley 30% in the last 8 years they really need more tax breaks to invest in hedgefunds and overseas enterprises.

Posted on 09/04/08 at 10:06AM

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